

# HEADHUNTING FOR TOP TALENT IN EAST AFRICA



## How Cedar Africa Group leveraged on market networks and partnerships to deliver eight top professionals to Access to Finance Rwanda

Africa is endowed with quite an outstanding talent pool. The challenge for most organizations is that they lack the internal capacity and time to dive into this vast pool and extract the high-quality talent they need to achieve strategic objectives and organizational performance. On the other hand, professionals seek to work with organizations whose values align with their career goals and aspirations; a thriving environment where their skills are fully optimized. It is an intricate dance that needs an instructor who understands the needs of both partners and guides them to a harmonious synchrony in which each one shines.

For over a decade, Cedar Africa Group has embodied its name to provide strength, stability and clarity in the East African marketplace.



Through the years, the Nairobi – based firm has passionately and diligently sifted through the diverse East African landscape to gain a rich understanding of the job market. Cedar Africa Group is a trusted partner for organisations across the region, with strong expertise in change management, talent management, coaching and outplacement.

This in-depth knowledge of the market and heart for Africa won Cedar Africa Group an opportunity to guide Rwanda-based Access to Finance Rwanda (AFR) through a recruitment process that would ultimately see them find the perfect fits for various positions the organization sought to fill. Access to Finance Rwanda is a not-for-profit company that strives to develop sustainable improvements in the livelihoods of poor people, through reduced vulnerability shocks, increased incomes and employment creation. The intention is to support the removal of systemic barriers that hinder access to financial services by low-income people, particularly the rural poor, women, youth and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). As such, they needed a search partner to help them identify individuals who would drive the realization of these goals.

In addition to a demonstrated track record in delivery of similar assignments, AFR required the firm to evidence a strong network and links to suitable professionals and advisors from the region and beyond. Cedar Africa Group's extensive experience recruiting for organisations in the development sector including Financial Sector Deepening (FSD), a network of programmes in Africa that AFR is part of, cemented the firm's position as most qualified to take on this assignment.

The task was to identify and attract suitable talent for vacant roles within the new organization structure, and support the assessment of candidates using competency-based interviews, technical and behavioral assessments.

The Cedar Africa team consisting of specialised consultants hit the ground running as soon as AFR approved overall role briefs. They had their work cut out for them in a recruitment process that required an in-depth scan of the market to head-hunt for eight ambitious top-performing professionals to fill up the following positions; **Chief Operations Officer, Chief Programs Officer, Head of Monitoring, Results Measurement, Learning & Communication, Head of Digital Financial Services & Market Infrastructure, Head of Financial Inclusion & Resilience, Head of Finance for Growth and Jobs, Head of Research and Information and Gender and Inclusion Specialist.**

“AFR are keen on diversity and inclusivity so that was a key focus of our recruitment efforts. That and finding individuals who identify with the organization's mission, culture and values.

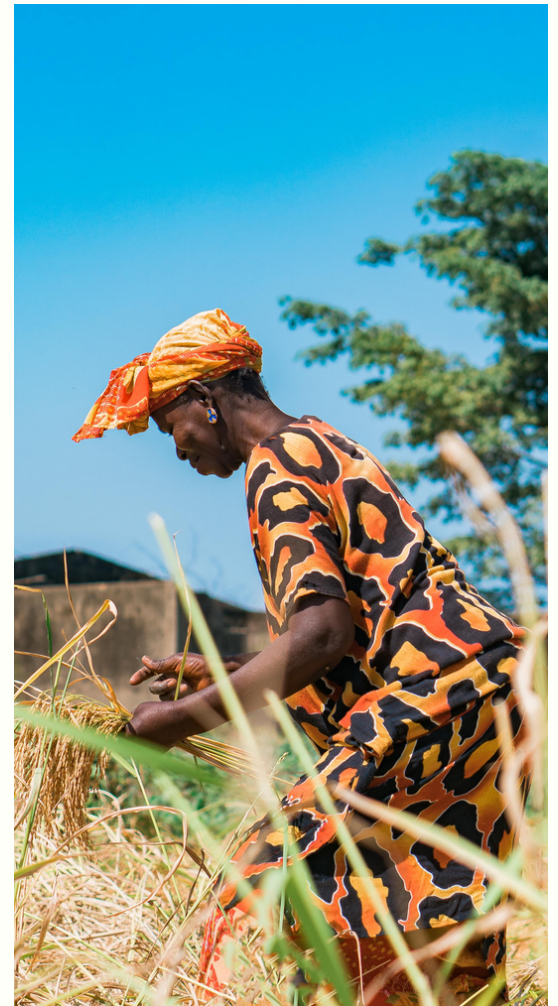
-Nyawera Kibuka, CEO,  
Cedar Africa Group”



Photo by: AFR



Filling positions can take a lot of time and effort on the organization's part. Recruitment is only part of the human resources (HR) department's scroll of tasks. By engaging Cedar Africa's head-hunting services, AFR was assured of expert management of the entire recruitment process. Cedar Africa Group allocated all necessary resources required to streamline the process and secure the right candidates in the shortest time possible. After a rigorous process that involved leveraging on broad networks and market place knowledge, the team forwarded longlists of the various positions to AFR. To their credit, AFR were prompt and precise with their feedback. This safeguarded the set timelines. Aptitude and personality assessments preceded first level interviews, after which reference and background checks were conducted. Cedar Africa focuses on a competency-based interview approach that supports the use of designed technical written assessments for the candidates as part of the selection process. Psychometric assessments for the top two or three candidates are also utilized to provide a holistic profile that informs final decision-making.



In an ever-evolving space, professionals are now assertively demanding transparency around work environments, remuneration and career growth opportunities. These factors inform their decision to accept or reject tabled offers. As a talent management firm, Cedar Africa is a partner to both the client and candidate. Most top performing professionals are often not actively looking for a new position; a seasoned industry specialist head hunter will therefore use their professional training to amplify the value proposition and persuade the perfect candidate to join the client's organization.

**Cedar Africa Group team was highly collaborative and demonstrated an understanding of our hiring needs. They were responsive throughout the process and used their expertise and experience to provide a high-quality list of candidates for a competitive interview process across all levels. Their professionalism and level of commitment to deliver timely and quality work is commendable.**

**-Access to Finance Rwanda Team**

“ I was quite pleased with Cedar Africa Group effective management of the process. My questions were well answered and the timely communication allowed me ample time to prepare for the next phase. I was eager to be part of an institution that has such a strong mission around financial inclusion.

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-Candidate, AFR Employee



Photo by: AFR

The partnership between Access to Finance Rwanda and Cedar Africa Group, two organizations united by a vision to deliver impact in Africa in their respective sectors, was a resounding success. All positions were filled and the professionals are settling in well.

“ We are amazed at the strength of talent in East Africa - the number of quality candidates out there even though these were hard roles to fill due to their technical nature. We are honoured to have done the deep diving and retrieval on behalf of AFR.

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-Cedar Africa Group Team



Delivering impact across Africa



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